

Week Ending Friday, February 4, 1994

Remarks to a National Conference of Mayors

January 28, 1994

Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President, all the members of our Cabinet who are here, and all those who have been here. I trust they've done such a good job that they've taken care of all the heavy lifting. *[Laughter]*

Mayor Abramson, I'm glad to be here with you and all your colleagues. And I thank you for coming to the White House and for coming to Washington. We need your help. I look out in this crowd today, and I see a lot of people with whom I have worked, people I know, people I consider my friends, and most importantly people I consider to be Americans in the best sense now, trying to come to grips with these problems.

This is going to be a good week for me. I long for the days when the mayors and the Governors come to town. It is in those days that this city is at its least partisan. When we have people who are responsible for running things, getting results, dealing with problems that have no necessary partisan content, I feel that at least there is a moment of hope in the air that we will be able to break out of this crazy paralysis that too often dominates this city. And so I am delighted to see you all.

I also want to thank you for the contributions you have made and will continue to make to the life and the ideas of this administration. I saw the press conference yesterday that Mayor Daley, I think, and Mayor Johnson, maybe some others had, on the melt-down of the weapons. I received a copy of Mayor Rendell's letter to the Vice President on suggestions for an urban agenda, gave the instructions that we should review those ideas in a hurry. I've had a lot of talks in the last few days with Mayor Archer, Mayor Riley, and Mayor Rice. Mayor Webb has talked to me about his efforts.

I want to say a special word of thanks to Mayor Abramson for the op-ed piece that he wrote about—I think it was called your Russell Project, is that what—because you made the point that I have seen in Louisville, in Cleveland, in Chicago, and many other places, that there really are things that we can do if we have the right sort of partnership. There are ways to use the relatively modest amount of Federal money now available to match with local funds and private sector funds to really do things to get a lot of our troubled urban areas going again. And that was a very important point because there's a lot of cynicism about that around this town. And you helped to put a fresh note of reality into our discussions, and I appreciate that very much.

We're working hard up here to do a number of things, and I won't go through all of them. The Cabinet has doubtless discussed them with you. I would prefer, if I might, just to talk for a few moments about the crime bill. Yesterday I received a letter from the mayors of eight of our largest cities—Mayors Guiliani, Daley, Riordan, Rendell, Lanier, Archer, White, and Goldsmith—all backing the plan to put another 100,000 police officers on the street.

In the days following the quake in Los Angeles, the number of police officers on patrol, on actual patrol, was tripled, and crime in Los Angeles dropped so much that there were just 50 arrests per day in the whole huge city. That's one-tenth, I'll say again, one-tenth the normal number of arrests on any given day. In other words, crime dropped by 90 percent. I want to ask each of you here today, therefore, to help us to pass this crime bill and to do it in a timely fashion, to come back here with your colleagues without regard to party, and when you can, to bring your police chiefs and work for the next 60 days walking a beat in the Halls of Congress. You can be the community police for your cities here for the next 60 days.

With the crime bill, we'll get the police. We'll get drug treatment for those charged and convicted of crimes. We'll get boot camps for first time offenders. We'll get a ban on assault weapons and a number of other useful features. Just yesterday, the Vice President went to Dunbar High School where the day before there were shootouts in a hallway and in front of the school. In too many of our schools, guns have transformed the environment from one of learning to one of fear. And I looked at the television news last night, and I saw one of the young women looking at the Vice President saying, "If you guys can send a person to the Moon, why can't you get guns out of our streets and schools?" Inconveniently, the television switched to another subject before I heard his answer. But the young woman certainly asked the right question.

This administration does favor stronger punishment when it's appropriate. I do believe in the "three strikes and you're out" concept for violent criminals. It is clearly true that a small number of total criminals commit a large portion of violent crimes. So that is something we ought to do. But I think every one of us know, if you've ever walked the streets, really walked the streets of the crime-infested area, have ever really talked to the people who live there, who ever really focused on the fact that most people in the highest crime areas of America still obey the law, get up every day and go to work, try to raise their kids, try to do the very best they can. What they really want is safety in the first place, which means that we have to follow strategies that can also prevent crime, and we have to bring hope back to those places. We have to support the families and rebuild the communities and give people work.

I know of no example where you have a successful civilized society without strong elements of work, family, and community. And when all three break down at once, it should not be surprising to anyone that the vacuum created leads to crime and gangs and guns. So we have a lot of work to do.

Our community empowerment agenda is the beginning of that work, and it can lead to a lot more projects like the one that Mayor Abramson discussed in his fine op-ed piece.

But let me say for now, if you want me to be able to go out across this country and tell the American people they need to take more responsibility for their children and their neighborhoods and their communities, to try to help you to mobilize the support of the private sector to invest in the empowerment zones and take advantage of other opportunities in cities, the first thing we have to do is to do our part by passing a good crime bill and by doing it in a timely fashion. When I discussed this with some of you recently, one of the things you wanted to do is to make sure that if we said that bill would fund 100,000 policemen, that it would in fact do that on the terms as advertised. I think you need to make sure that's going to happen.

Another thing we discussed is to make sure that we had some initiatives which would also provide incentives for people to avoid crime or young people to turn away from crime. We need to experiment with things to see what actually lowers the crime rate. We know for sure that more people on patrol lowers the crime rate. I mean, Los Angeles just taught us that one more time. And we know there are some other things that do as well.

So, as you come up here to lobby, I ask you to give us the benefit of your ideas, your experience, and make sure we get the best possible bill. But the main thing is, we do not need to fool around with this for 6 months. I mean, there's already been a crime bill passed the Senate; there's already been a number of bills passed the House. We know now how we're going to pay for this and within range how much money we can spend on it, and we have it paid for. And our administration's budget, tight though it is, actually provides the funding for it. So let's do it, and let's do it with the benefit of the mayors and the chiefs of police who know what it is to do it right.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:57 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Jerry Abramson of Louisville, KY; Mayor Richard Daley of Chicago, IL; Mayor Paul Johnson of Phoenix, AZ; Mayor Edward Rendell of Philadelphia, PA; Mayor Dennis W. Archer of Detroit, MI; Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. of Charleston, SC; Mayor Norman B. Rice of Seattle, WA; Mayor Richard Riordan of Los Ange-

les; Mayor Bob Lanier of Houston, TX; Mayor Michael White of Cleveland, OH; and Mayor Stephen Goldsmith of Indianapolis, IN. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Statement on Oregon Governor
Barbara Roberts' Decision Not To
Seek Reelection**

January 28, 1994

It was with regret that I learned of Oregon Governor Barbara Roberts' decision not to seek reelection.

I have been very fortunate to work with the Governor on issues affecting the people of the Northwest and the Nation: health care, economic opportunity, and the protection of our natural resources. Her leadership on these and other issues will be missed.

I commend Governor Roberts for her dedication to the people of Oregon throughout her 20 years of public service. My best wishes go out to the Governor and her family.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Nomination for Associate Judges on
the Superior Court of the District of
Columbia**

January 28, 1994

The President today announced that he intends to nominate Judith Bartnoff and Zoe Bush to serve as Associate Judges on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

"Judith Bartnoff and Zoe Bush have both distinguished themselves throughout their legal careers as dedicated and accomplished professionals," said the President. "I am confident that they will serve the people of the District of Columbia well on the Superior Court bench."

NOTE: Biographies of the nominees were made available by the Office of the Press Secretary. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

January 29, 1994

Good morning. If I sound a little hoarse today it's because I haven't completely recovered my voice which I lost after I gave the State of the Union Address to Congress. You know, I don't like losing my voice, but frankly, it wouldn't be a bad thing in Washington if more people had to lower their voices and listen to you a little more. I think if they did, it would strengthen their determination to keep fighting to change this country for the better.

A lot of changes have occurred in the last year, and you, basically, deserve the credit for it, even though Congress had to enact the laws that I proposed. There's been an economic plan that cuts the deficit by half a trillion dollars, more than 1.6 million new jobs in the private sector, tax relief for 15 million low- and moderate-wage workers to reward work over welfare, a family and medical leave law to enable people to take a little time off when there's a child born or a parent sick without losing their jobs, the Brady bill to keep more guns out of the hands of criminals, more affordable loans for the middle class, and a national service program for young people who want to give something back to their communities and their country and earn credit toward a college education.

And it's beginning to pay off. Yesterday we received very encouraging growth figures for the last 3 months of 1993. This economic plan is promoting the right kind of recovery and growth through smaller deficits, lower interest rates, lower inflation, and productive investment. It's not the kind of growth we had too much in the 1980's, where there was ballooning debt and paper prosperity.

I know a lot of you aren't yet feeling the benefits of these changes, and our work won't be done until every American has the security to face the future without fear. But because you've demanded change, Washington finally is addressing America's agenda, the problems you face in your jobs, your communities, and your families.

Because good skills are the only tickets to good jobs and growing incomes, I'm asking Congress this year to invest more in education and training, to transform the unem-